

## Multiple Injuries to Trainee Arborist—the Result of a Basic Error

A trainee arborist suffered multiple injuries when he was pulled out of a tree and fell 10 metres while section felling.

### What Happened

A two-man gang was section felling Norfolk Island pines. One was a qualified arborist and the other a trainee. The arborist had completed felling one tree with the trainee acting as groundsmen. The arborist considered that there was an opportunity for the trainee to section fell the second tree under his direct supervision. The trainee was fully briefed before climbing commenced. The top third of the tree was delimited and the trainee successfully completed the top section with the arborist controlling and guiding the section to the ground with an attached lowering rope. The trainee then started to work on the next section. The lowering rope was attached and the trainee started the scarf. The arborist was not satisfied with the scarf and the trainee did it again in the correct position. The arborist then gave the trainee the all clear to do the back cut. The back cut was completed and the section, guided by the lowering rope started to fall. Unfortunately, the trainee's anchor rope was still attached to the top of the section and he was pulled from the tree as the section fell.

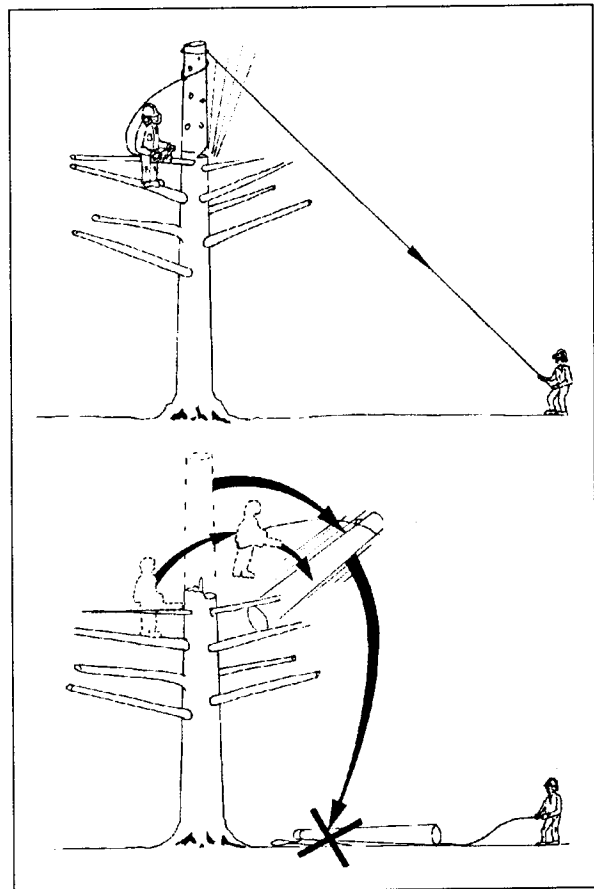
### Accident Cause

The trainee's anchor rope was attached to the section of the tree being felled.

### Prevention

From the company's accident investigation the following points were recommended:

- Communication between the groundsmen and the climber to be improved by the possible use of radio headsets.



- All ropes to be visually checked by both the climber and groundsmen before a section is removed.
- A review of training systems to be undertaken covering:
  - Job/task breakdowns
  - Job allocation
  - Authorization as to what tasks can be carried out
  - Role and duties of groundsmen to be clarified.

# Don't Work Forward of Cut-Up Trees

A feller was fatally injured when struck by a cut-up tree.

## What Happened

In a clear felling operation, skid work had become congested due to a backlog of trimming. It was decided to shift a skid worker to felling and trimming to relieve this. The worker was an experienced feller.

He had scarfed and back cut a tree and inserted a holding wedge when it did not fall in the intended direction of fall. He then proceeded to scarf and back cut another tree which also required a holding wedge. He then moved forward of the two cut-up trees and felled a further tree. He was cutting the stump of this tree lower when one of the cut-up trees, possibly affected by a slight wind gust, fell and struck him.

## Accident Cause

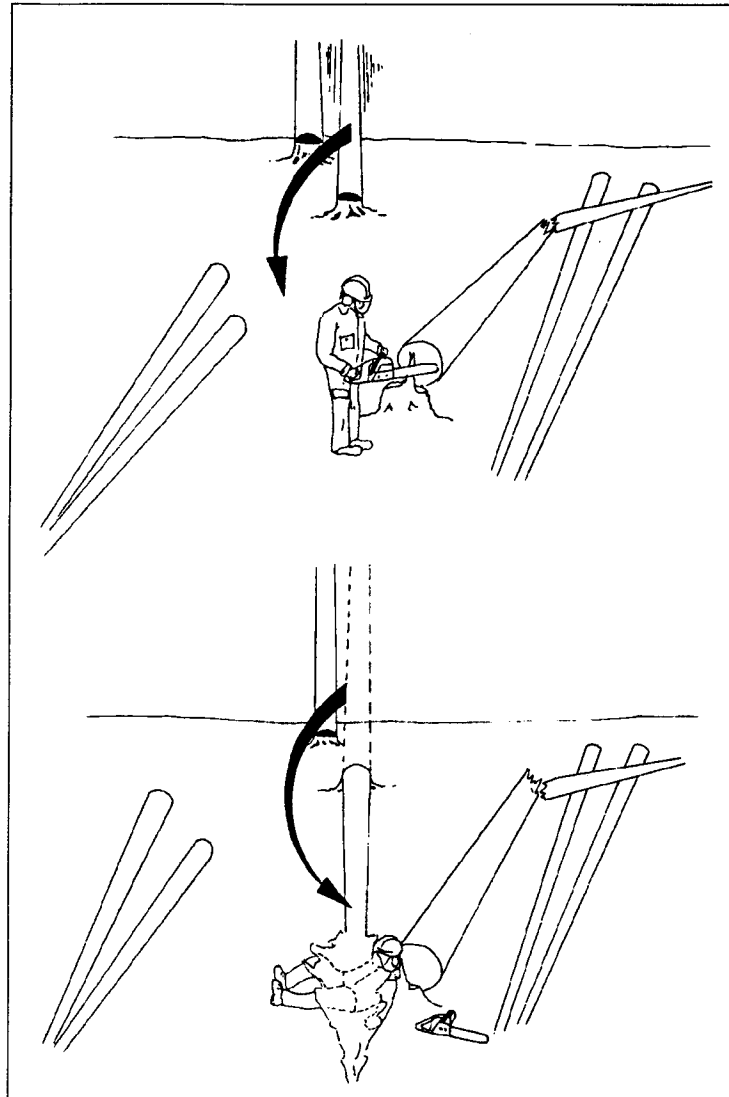
Working forward of the intended direction of fall of a cut-up tree.

**Note:** Fellow workers were puzzled why the feller had not asked for assistance from the gang's skidder to assist in bringing the two cut-up trees to the ground.

## Prevention

Simple steps are outlined in the current safety codes for forest operations for logging and silviculture and these are repeated here in full from the logging code as two out of eight logging fatalities for the year ending 30 June 1995 were caused by working forward of cut-up trees.

**19.5** Where a tree is "hung up" or "cut up" it shall be brought to the ground as soon as possible, and before operations continue. A "hung-up" or "cut-up" tree shall not be left standing, nor shall the feller leave the area before the tree has been



brought to the ground, other than to seek assistance to do so. The person in charge of the operation and any other person in the vicinity is to be notified and additional cautions taken immediately.

**39.11** No person shall move forward within two tree lengths of the direction of fall of any "hung-up" or "cut-up" tree or the direction of fall of any "hung-up" tree.